

Dear Senator Ryan and members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to you as a strong supporter of Bozeman High School and a strong supporter of a Big Sky High School as well. My enthusiasm for Bozeman High is personal: I was born and raised in Bozeman and am a 1987 graduate of BHS. In addition I have strong attachments to the educational community of Bozeman, as Mother taught in Bozeman for 30 years prior to retiring and my Father continues to teach and coach after 39 years. I enjoyed my experience there, and I believe BHS offers an exemplary education.

However, I am also a small business owner in Big Sky, as well as the father of two small children who attend Ophir School. It is in this capacity that I feel most strongly about the need for a high school in Big Sky. Not having a secondary school in Big Sky hurts my business in very real and measurable ways. This is why I ask you to support Senate Bill 152.

I employ about 20 people at the Montana Real Estate Company. Since opening our doors in 2001, we have lost more than a few employees who have had to move to Bozeman when their children reach high school age. Replacing these employees and re-training the new hires costs my company an estimated \$40,000 per employee. Much of this cost is in locating new employees, as we have found that most people with older children are hesitant to take a job in Big Sky because of the lack of educational opportunity beyond eighth grade.

We also find our business suffers negative impacts from the area's lack of a high school. Many potential second-home owners, and particularly potential home owners who are considering re-locating, are hesitant to do so because there is nowhere for their children to conveniently attend high school. Since this is not the case in most other ski resort communities, this puts our Big Sky product at a disadvantage.

When you consider the recent economic report, and how much Big Sky already contributes to the economy, it seems to me that it only makes good business sense for the state to support an area which is such an important economic engine for the entire state. I appreciate your support for SB 152.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like any additional information and the community of Big Sky and I appreciate your support very much.

Sincerely,

Tim Anderson
Owner/Manager
Montana Real Estate Co. of Big Sky LLC